

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT PAYMENT EQUALITY "HOPE" ACT

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to provide needed relief for our Nation's hospitals seeking redress from the Balanced Budget Act (BBA). My legislation, the Medicare Hospital Outpatient Payment Equality (HOPE) Act, addresses the Health Care Financing Administration's (HCFA) proposal to implement the Medicare Outpatient Prospective Payment System (PPS). HCFA's proposal will affect a hospital's ability to deliver outpatient services through reimbursement reductions up to 30 to 40 percent.

Under the PPS, in my home State of New York, hospitals from every corner of the State would see major reductions in their outpatient payments. Hospitals in my district on Long Island would be harmed. Hospitals in northern New York rural areas, such as the Adirondack Medical Center in Lake Placid will realize reductions totaling 16.9 percent in one year. Urban hospitals in New York's major cities, like their rural counterparts, will witness similar reductions. Mt. Sinai Medical Center, one of America's premier teaching hospitals, will see their outpatient payments cut by 37.6 percent in just one year. In fact, New York's urban hospitals are among the most severely hurt by the proposed PPS in the Nation. According to HCFA's own analysis, 19 of the top 100 hospitals in the Nation that are hurt by the proposed PPS are in New York State.

Most importantly, the HCFA proposal could harm seniors. For example, a Medicare beneficiary living in the most underserved parts of New York City receive routine, preventive health services from a local clinic. Clinics provide cost-efficient, low-cost, quality care. This patient's health care needs, under my bill, would be preserved because the clinic would be able to stay open to serve seniors.

Another example of who my bill helps is the senior living in any small town in northern New York. Under the HCFA PPS, that senior's care will be jeopardized because of inadequate reimbursements to the local emergency room and they may end up having to close their doors because of financial reasons. The closest ER, then, may be 100–150 miles away. Emergency rooms are not a profitable part of the hospital and require adequate reimbursement to care for seniors with emergency needs. If this patient needs immediate attention for a heart condition, requiring them to travel hours to the nearest emergency room is not a good way to provide care. The ERs need to be there. My bill would ensure that these ER services are available to seniors.

The outpatient reductions are due to go into effect in early 2000. I introduce this legislation today because we must take steps to ensure seniors' access to care. We must address the

inadequacies in the Medicare outpatient payment system by restoring funds to all hospitals so they can take care of our seniors. My legislation would do so through several changes.

First, the Medicare HOPE Act would implement a three-year transition to limit losses as a result of HCFA's PPS. Any new payment system must include a transition mechanism to enable hospitals to gradually adjust to the new PPS.

Second, the Medicare HOPE Act would increase payments for emergency room and clinic visits. One of the ways to help many of the essential city, suburban, and rural safety net hospitals with large losses due to the PPS is to increase payments for emergency room and clinic services. Emergency rooms provide life-saving care that is not available to Medicare beneficiaries in any other setting. These services are provided without consideration of one's ability to pay and it is essential that Medicare adequately reimburse hospitals for its share of emergency room services. Also, clinics provide many preventative and inexpensive services that monitor and manage the health status of Medicare beneficiaries. This results in lower utilization of more expensive health care services. Hospitals that have the highest share of clinic visits also treat the highest percentage of poor patients. For this reason, my legislation addresses the specific, unique needs of these hospitals.

Finally, the Medicare HOPE Act would rescind the annual 1 percent reduction in the outpatient PPS "inflation" update factor. Without this restoration, payments for outpatient services would be reduced by an additional 3 percent.

By introducing this bill today, I join many of my colleagues that have introduced or cosponsored legislation which recognizes that America's hospitals are heavily burdened by the unintended consequences of the BBA.

My legislation helps all types of hospitals across this country because HCFA's outpatient PPS hurts many hospitals across the country. The legislation offers a solution for my colleagues seeking relief for hospitals. This legislation is endorsed by the American Hospital Association and several State hospital associations including the Healthcare Association of New York State.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring the Medicare HOPE Act.

RECOGNIZING THE 16TH ANNUAL CIRCLE CITY CLASSIC

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 1999

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bestow recognition on a wonderful event in my home town of Indianapolis. This weekend, the 16th annual Circle City Classic football game will be played in Indianapolis.

The Circle City Classic is the second largest college bowl game played between two histori-

cally black colleges. It features the Hampton Pirates and the Southern Jaguars this year.

Fans attending the game enjoy not only a competitive football game, but also a highly spirited and energetic battle of the school bands at half time.

Before the game, a parade through the streets of downtown Indianapolis further delights the thousands of people who line the parade route. With the sounds of music echoing throughout the community, the atmosphere in Indianapolis during the Classic weekend is truly exciting, memorable and a true classic.

The Circle City Classic is one of Indianapolis' treasures, and is a testament to the spirit, vision, and commitment of The Indiana Sports Corporation and Indiana Black Expo.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all of my colleagues to come to Indianapolis to experience the wonderful Circle City Classic.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK G. LUMPKIN, JR.

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 1999

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, Fort Benning, in Columbus, GA, is an important Army base associated with many distinguished individuals over time. It has received innumerable citations for its outstanding achievements. It is the home of the U.S. Army Infantry School and the U.S. Army School of the Americas. Some call it the biggest military school in the world, because it trains over 60,000 soldiers each year. Every infantry officer, enlisted man, and non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army trains there at least once in his career. With a military population of 21,000, Ft. Benning is the home of the 75th Ranger Regiment, 3rd Brigade—3rd Infantry Division, the 29th Infantry Regiment, as well as an Infantry Training Brigade and a Basic Combat Training Brigade.

The base is associated with many famous soldiers. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Gen. George C. Marshall, Gen. Omar Bradley, Gen. George Patton and Gen. Colin Powell served there.

However, one individual whose name has become part of the post's heritage actually had a short career as a soldier. His name, Frank G. Lumpkin, Jr., is interwoven with Ft. Benning's history. Mr. Lumpkin's name was there at the Fort's founding, and will be there into the future, for it graces the road that runs through the main post. Frank G. Lumpkin Jr. was only 10 years old when he accompanied his father to Washington in 1916. His father persuaded Congress to place a military base on the Chattahoochee. Two years later, Fort Benning was founded in connection with the Lumpkins, and that relationship remains until the present day.

Twenty-four years after that trip, Mr. Lumpkin himself served at Ft. Benning. It was

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